

# West Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Examination – Post Hearings Tasks

**Note on how the Scope of West Berkshire’s Climate Emergency Declaration and Environment Strategy extends to preparation of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan.**

## 1. Introduction

1.1 West Berkshire Council unanimously declared a Climate Emergency on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2019. The Motion proposed:

*“This Council notes that:*

- 1. All levels of government (national, regional and local) have a responsibility to limit the negative impacts of Climate Breakdown. It is important for the residents of West Berkshire and the UK that we commit to working towards carbon neutrality as quickly as possible.*
- 2. The consequences of global temperature rising above 1.5°C are so severe that preventing this from happening must be of the utmost urgency.*
- 3. Bold climate action can deliver economic benefits in terms of new jobs, economic savings and market opportunities (as well as improved health and wellbeing) but will also require changes in individuals’ lifestyles and have a cost implication to both the individual and the state.*

*West Berkshire Council therefore:*

- 1. Declares a Climate Emergency.*
- 2. Will create a strategic plan for West Berkshire, that aims to deliver carbon neutral by 2030.*
- 3. Calls on HM Government to provide the Council with the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible.*
- 4. Will work with other authorities to determine and implement where practicable best practice methods to limit Global Warming to less than 1.5°C.*
- 5. Will continue to work with businesses, residents and other stakeholders across the district to deliver this new goal via all relevant strategies and plans.*
- 6. The newly formed Environment Board will provide an interim report to the Executive in September 2019 with the progress made to date.”*

1.2 In January 2020 the Council published a Draft Environment Strategy for wider consultation by the whole community, after which the final strategy was approved by the Council’s Executive on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020. For clarity, there were no changes from the Draft Environment Strategy to the final Environment Strategy that were relevant to plan-making.

## 2. Environment Strategy 2020 – 2030

2.1 The Environment Strategy begins by setting out the context in which the strategy should be seen, stating (p. 9):

*“Importantly, this strategy does not sit in isolation from what we are seeking to do to make West Berkshire a better place to live, work, learn and visit. Instead, it seeks to complement our wider work... which began with the development of the West Berkshire 2036 Vision and will continue with the publication of a range of strategies for the district’s future.”*

2.2 Chapter 4 of the Environment Strategy provides a Vision (p. 13):

*This strategy has a primary target of achieving **carbon neutrality** in West Berkshire by 2030.*

*Mitigation of the effects of climate change and the restoration and protection of our environment will have **shaped our policy making and actions**, as well as those of our partners, and will have made a significant impact on the district’s carbon footprint.*

*Our **environmental assets will have been protected** for future generations.*

*The **residents, businesses and communities** of West Berkshire will continue to be active partners in delivering positive change. These will have included lifestyle changes, more effective use of energy, the adoption of new technology, efficient running of our public services and new, or adapted, infrastructure.*

*Progress towards carbon neutrality will have been made **alongside the district’s other strategic priorities**, including protecting and supporting the vulnerable, improving educational outcomes, maintaining a high quality of life for residents, and a strong local economy.”*

2.3 Chapter 5 of the Environment Strategy then sets out the Strategic Objectives to deliver this Vision. These include:



2.4 In setting out how the Council will become a carbon neutral operation by 2030 the Environment Strategy makes it clear that indirect emissions (also referred to as “Scope 3 emissions”) are excluded (Environment Strategy 4.1.3). Indirect emissions are those that are associated with the activities of an organisation, but are produced by sources they do not own or control. More information can be found on “Scope 3 emissions” on the Carbon Trust’s website: <https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/faqs/services/scope-3-indirect-carbon-emissions/>.

### 3. Environment Strategy Delivery Plan (January 2022)

3.1 Alongside the Environment Strategy, the Council has also published a Delivery Plan which was approved by the Council’s Executive on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021, and most recently updated in January 2022.

3.2 The Delivery Plan lays out a framework of actions to achieve the goal to reach carbon neutrality for the district by 2030.

3.3 Each of the actions in the plan has been given a unique reference number relating to the Strategic Objectives of the Environment Strategy (Carbon Neutral by 2030, Responsible Economic Growth, Healthy Communities, Resilient to Climate Change and Working with Our Communities and Partners).

3.4 Of the 87 individual actions contained in the Delivery Plan, two relate to land use planning: REG001 and RC012

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: RESPONSIBLE ECONOMIC GROWTH								
Ref	Actions	Performance Measures	Timescale		Responsibility	Comment / Progress	Predicted Carbon Saving Impact	Links to the Environment Strategy: Statements of Commitment
			Start	Complete				
REG001	Ensure aims and objectives of Environment Strategy are reflected in the Local Plan to include such things as high environmental standards for new residential and commercial developments	Local Plan policies drive high environmental standards in new developments	Short term	Short term	WBC Env Delivery / Planning Policy	In progress, on track	High	5.2 Responsible Economic Growth: Use our planning system to ensure that all commercial developments meet a minimum environmental standard so that any adverse impacts associated with new buildings are minimised. 6.1.5 Protecting and Enhancing our Natural Environment: Safeguard and enhance the beauty of our distinctive landscape and improving its environmental value while being sensitive to considerations of its heritage 6.1.5 Protecting and Enhancing our Natural Environment: Apply emerging Government requirements for environmental protection and improved biodiversity through the planning process

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: RESILIENT TO CLIMATE CHANGE								
Ref	Actions	Performance Measures	Timescale		Responsibility	Comment / Progress	Predicted Carbon Saving Impact	Links to the Environment Strategy: Statements of Commitment
			Start	Complete				
RC012	Develop mandatory WBC staff training on carbon reduction and climate change, as well as specific training where needs are identified (for example, for planners and local developers on how to ensure new developments are resilient to climate change)	WBC staff have the relevant information to reduce their own carbon footprint as well as influence positive changes in their work remit	Medium term	Ongoing	WBC Env Dev Team	Not started	Low/Medium	Not mentioned

### 4. Implications for the Minerals and Waste Local Plan

4.1 Neither the Environment Strategy nor the associated Delivery Plan specifically mention Minerals and Waste planning; any reference to waste is in relation to Municipal Waste regarding West Berkshire Council’s function as Waste Collection and Disposal Authority.

- 4.2 Delivery Plan Action REG001 refers to ensuring that the aims and objectives of the Environment Strategy are reflected in the Local Plan through requiring high environmental standards for new residential and commercial developments, which is being progressed through the [Local Plan Review](#) (refer Policy DC3).
- 4.3 Delivery Plan Action RC012 refers to training for WBC planning staff on carbon reduction and climate resilience. Whilst this will contribute to an increased knowledge base and will assist with assessing planning applications it is not considered directly relevant to the preparation of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan (MWLP).
- 4.4 However, in general, the MWLP does include the following measures to assist with achieving the Vision and Objectives of the Environment Strategy:
- The Vision of the MWLP specifically refers to facilitating the delivery of minerals resources and waste management capacity in the most sustainable way, taking into account climate change (MM2).
  - Objective M2 relates to achieving sustainable development by taking into consideration meeting the demand for mineral resources, and also the need to protect quality of life and protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment, whilst taking into account climate change (MM3).
  - Objective W8 aims to ensure appropriate protection and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment from the adverse effects of waste management, whilst also taking into account climate change (MM4).
  - Policy 3 (Net Self-sufficiency) aims to deliver climate change benefits by driving waste management up the waste hierarchy due to the fact that higher levels of the waste hierarchy are associated with fewer carbon impacts.
  - Policy 17 (Restoration and After-use of Sites) - this policy requires proposals for restoration of sites to take into account flood risk management, including provision for climate change resilience, biodiversity conservation and enhancement and the provision or enhancement of recreational facilities and green infrastructure. These will all contribute to reducing carbon impacts and adapting to climate change.
  - Policy 20 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) will build resilience and adaptability to climate change by requiring minerals and waste development to deliver a 10% net gain for biodiversity. This could facilitate the provision of additional green infrastructure and benefits such as flood storage, rainfall interception and urban heat retention.
  - Policy 22 (Transport) will also assist to reduce climate impacts by encouraging sustainable modes of transport where practicable, requiring appropriate emission control and reduction measures and consideration of sustainable travel to sites for staff and visitors.
  - Policy 24 (Flooding) will also assist in adapting to climate change by requiring developments to demonstrate that they will not increase flood risk and seek to reduce flood risk, provide flood protection, resilience and resistance measures, and incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems.
  - Policy 25 (Climate Change) will directly assist in achieving climate change benefits by requiring proposals to:

- Minimise greenhouse gas emissions and encourage sustainable use of resource, through the location and design of the site and transport arrangements.
- Provide on-site renewable and low carbon energy technologies.
- Avoid areas vulnerable to climate change and flood risk.
- Provide climate change adaptation and mitigation measures; and
- Provide climate change benefits through site restoration and afteruse.

4.5 In addition, the effects of minerals and waste development on climate change have been taken into account through the Sustainability Appraisal of the MWLP **[CD003 series]**, in particular through assessment against Objective 8: 'To maximise energy efficiency, the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources and adaptability to climate change', and Objective 10: 'To promote the sustainable transport of minerals and waste within West Berkshire'.

4.6 Therefore it is considered the above measures demonstrate that the MWLP will assist in achieving the Vision and Strategic Objectives of the Environment Strategy, as they relate to plan-making.